

Theme 2 - Issues of Good and Evil - Good, Evil and Suffering

- † Beliefs on the Origin of Evil: Original Sin and ‘soul making’
- † Challenges posed by belief in God, the existence of evil and suffering.

Key Concepts

Good/Evil	Good is what is morally right and to our advantage; evil is considered immoral and wrong	Justice	Fairness; where everyone has equal opportunities
Forgiveness	Granting pardon for a wrongdoing	Free Will	Ability to make choices; nothing is predetermined
Conscience	Moral sense of right and wrong	Pacifism	War and violence can't be justified
Suffering	Pain or distress that can be physical or emotional	Morality	Principles determining right from wrong

Key Sources of Authority

St Irenaeus and John Hick - ‘soul-making’

Conscience

Key Quotes

‘You are not a God that has pleasure in wickedness’
Psalm 5:4

‘In the beginning God created heaven and earth’ Genesis 1:1

‘In the image of God, He created him, male and female He created them’ Genesis 1:27

Beliefs on the origin of good and evil: Original Sin and ‘soul making’

Christians believe that the world created by **God** was initially **good**, but humans were given **free will** by **God** to make **moral** choices. Christians have different beliefs about the causes of **evil** and **suffering**. Some Christians, e.g. **Catholics**, believe humans are born with **original sin**. This refers to the disobedience in the **Garden of Eden** when the first **sin** was committed by **Eve** eating the forbidden fruit. Some believe that this act of disobedience introduced **sin** to the world. Some Christians believe **God** allows **evil** to exist to develop **moral souls (soul-making)**. **St Irenaeus** believed **God** does not prevent **evil** as this would interfere with **free-will**. **Hick** and **St Irenaeus** believe **God** created humans with the potential for **spiritual growth**.

Challenges posed by belief in God, and the existence of evil and suffering

There are many different beliefs about why people suffer. Some believe it helps make a **moral soul (soul-making)**. **St Irenaeus** believed that humans were not created perfect but with the potential for **spiritual growth** and that through suffering **moral souls** are developed. **St Irenaeus** believed **God** does not intervene with suffering as that would go against beliefs in **free will**. **John Hick** agrees with this theory and believes that **God** created humans with the potential for **spiritual growth - ‘soul-making’**. For many Christians there are no answers as to why people suffer apart from it being a natural part of life. Some believe that through suffering they can understand the suffering of **Jesus**. Some Christians believe in the **Devil** as an actual being who can bring about **evil** and **suffering**.

Exam Practice

What is meant by conscience? (2)

Key Connections

Each area of study will connect with other areas in Christianity and other philosophical and ethical issues.

Consider how beliefs in free will relate to beliefs about **judgement and the afterlife**.

Consider how beliefs in the origin of evil and existence of suffering relates to **evil and suffering**.